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**Report of Japan's scientific observer program for tuna longline fishery  
in the convention area of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission  
in 2018 calendar year**

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**Summary**

In accordance with Resolution C-11-08, Japan commenced its scientific observer program for longline fishery in the convention area of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) from 1 January 2013. This document provides the scientific observers' information in 2018 calendar year. In 2018 calendar year, 14 observer trips were conducted on Japanese tuna longline vessels in the Convention Area.

**Keywords**

Longline, Japan, Scientific observer, Tuna fisheries

**Introduction**

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**Training of the scientific observer**

In principal, all scientific observers attend a training class held by Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF) and Japan NUS (JANUS) under Japan's observer program before their departure for the cruise. The National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries (NRIFSF) provides an observer manual and supervises the training course. Under the course scientific observers are trained in skills necessary for conduct its part, including species identification, data recording protocols *etc.*

**Results**

**i) Observer trip number, observed fishing operations and observer coverage**

In 2018 calendar year, 14 observer trips were conducted on Japanese tuna longline vessels. Total number of observed fishing operations of 14 trips was 625 days. Information of the trips is shown in Table 1. The tentative observer coverage in this year was 7.5% by number of operations (625/8,348).

**ii) Catch records, including bycatch data**

Observers recorded every item taken on deck and identified the species by themselves. Observers also collected bycatch data. They took photo of bycatch species according to the procedures given in the observer manual made by NRIFSF scientists. Bycatch experts in NRIFSF identified species using these photos.

The list of species recorded by scientific observer on longline fishery in 2018 was shown in Table 2.

In relation to paragraph 3 of Resolution C-11-10, six interactions of oceanic whitetip shark were recorded by observers in 2 trips (Table 2). Four whitetip sharks were dead discarded and others were released alive.

In relation to paragraph 4 of Resolution C-15-04, three interactions of Mobulid ray were recorded by observers in 2 trips (Table 2).

In relation to paragraph 4.a of Resolution C-04-05, three interactions of Sea Turtles were recorded by observers in 3 trips (Table 2), and all of them were released.

**Table 1. Information on the trip of the scientific observer for Japanese tuna longline in the convention areas of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission during 2018 calendar year.**

Trip ID	Range of latitude	Range of longitude	Start date of operation	End date of operation	Number of operations	Number of hooks
Trip 1	12.0-12.2S	122.0-122.2W	2018/1/1	2018/1/8	8	26,271
Trip 2	10.6-14.3S	98.8-112.4W	2018/1/1	2018/3/2	56	142,101
Trip 3	7.7-16.0S	119.5-126.5W	2018/1/2	2018/2/1	28	66,400
Trip 4	4.9N-10.4S	119.5-143.1W	2018/1/1	2018/2/10	31	81,480
Trip 5	5.3-9.2S	124.1-130.8W	2018/2/14	2018/4/11	52	131,116
Trip 6	7.3-12.0S	112.8-117.1W	2018/1/1	2018/1/22	20	49,572
Trip 7	17.3-22.0S	81.7-85.3W	2018/6/5	2018/7/28	52	154,020
Trip 8	7.1-18.1S	119.9-125.6W	2018/6/11	2018/8/16	61	180,630
Trip 9	3.0N-14.2S	129.5-149.0W	2018/7/22	2018/11/21	74	223,355
Trip10	13.1-16.0S	89.8-103.4W	2018/9/9	2018/11/12	61	163,530
Trip 11	1.7-16.0S	127.0-149.8W	2018/7/22	2018/11/21	69	193,045
Trip12	8.7-9.1S	111.9-112.6W	2018/11/22	2018/12/10	19	62,985
Trip13	9.1-15.0S	92.3-112.6W	2018/10/2	2018/12/28	80	194,616
Trip14	9.7-11.3S	113.7-115.8W	2018/12/18	2018/12/31	14	38,142
Total	—	—	—	—	625	1,707,263

**Table 2. List of species recorded by scientific observer on longline fishery in the Convention Area in 2018 calendar year (Unit: Number of individuals).**

Trip	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Species							
Albacore	45	8	179	19	12	0	263
Yellowfin tuna	2	186	17	23	111	19	358
Bigeye tuna	95	498	168	217	499	150	1627
Skipjack tuna	1	10	5	2	12	10	40
Sailfish	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Black marlin	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Blue marlin	4	17	15	4	24	0	64
Spearfishes	4	21	9	7	25	10	76
Striped marlin	0	22	5	9	5	12	53
Sword fish	85	130	112	133	191	86	737
Other teleosts	102	121	294	164	170	164	1015
Thresher sharks	0	80	3	49	16	4	152
Shortfin mako	0	2	0	1	2	0	5
Blue shark	10	229	105	46	153	32	575
Oceanic whitetip shark	0	0	0	2	4	0	6
Other Sharks	4	277	96	110	196	135	818
Sting ray	27	32	194	101	316	81	751
Mobulid Rays	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Other Rays	0	0	2	0	3	0	5
Sea Birds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sea Turtles	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Mammals	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	379	1635	1205	889	1740	707	6555

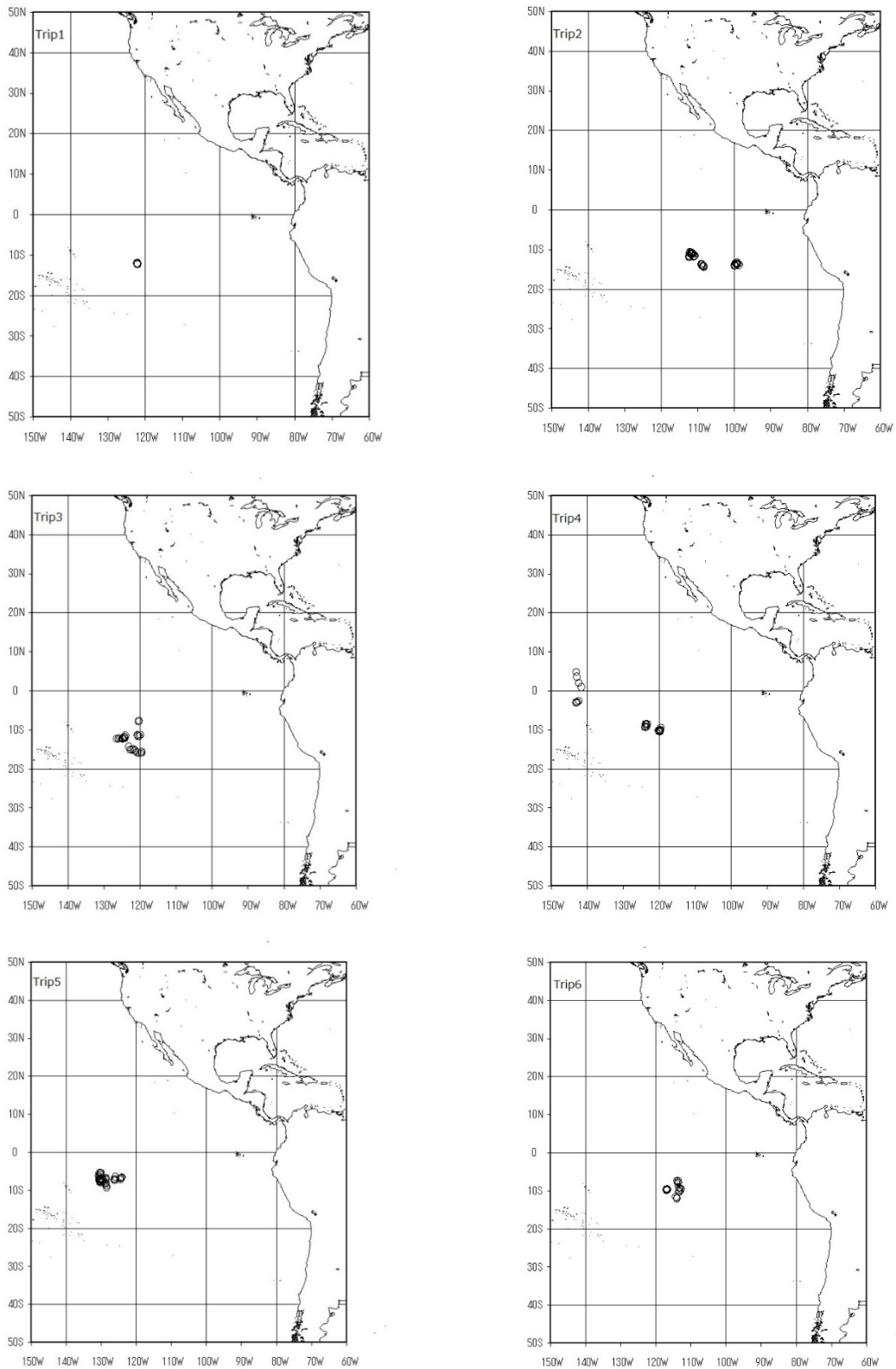


Fig 1. Line setting locations of Japanese tuna longline for the trips with the scientific observer onboard in the convention areas of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission during 2018 calendar year (Trip 1 to 6).

**Acknowledgement**

We greatly appreciate all scientific observers for their efforts in order to collect valuable data and samples on the Japanese longline vessels. We would also like to express special thanks to all crews of the longline vessels for their understanding and cooperation to the observer program.